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BRIEFER COMMUNICATIONS.

THE MUSÉE SOCIAL IN PARIS.

Under present conditions, it is not so much the lack of material as the difficulty of obtaining access to that already in existence that is the greatest obstacle in the way of accurate and satisfactory studies of actual economic conditions and institutions. Here, as in few other fields of research, the ordinary library can be utilized to little advantage. One can find there what has already been written upon a subject, but for purposes of strictly original research, it is scarcely worth a visit. The class of material that should be consulted either is not there at all, or, if possessed, is of such a nature as to defy ordinary cataloguing methods. This material consists of government reports relating to questions of industry and labor, proceedings of labor and social congresses and conventions, the constitutions and reports of private organizations and institutions such as trade-unions, co-operative societies, mutual aid funds, etc., the files of economic and statistical periodicals, the published proceedings of statistical and other kindred societies, which include the results of original research, etc.

The readers of the *ANNALS* cannot fail to be interested in a brief description of the *Musée Social*, an institution recently organized in Paris, which is, without doubt, the most remarkable effort that has been made to supply this deficiency on the part of ordinary libraries, and to render available the real sources of information concerning economic conditions and institutions.

The *Musée* owes its creation directly to the organization of sections of social economy in connection with recent international expositions. The first exposition which had such a section was that of 1867 at Paris. Le Play, the eminent economist, was directed, on that occasion, to organize a section to embrace "all documents on subjects relating to efforts to ameliorate the physical and moral condition of of the population." The central feature of this section was the creation of the famous New Order of Recompenses (*Nouvel Ordre de Récompenses*) "in favor of persons, or establishments, or localities, which by the organization of special institutions had developed the

feeling of harmony among all those who co-operate in the work of production and had assured to the workingmen material, moral and intellectual advantages."* This exposition, in which over six hundred of the most important industrial establishments of the world took part, is recognized throughout France to constitute the point of departure in the history of the modern study of social conditions.

At the exposition of Paris in 1889, the scope of the section of social economy was still further enlarged. At this exposition, there was assembled a vast quantity of documents of an original character, such as the constitutions of societies, the reports of operations of workingmen's institutions, models of workingmen's houses, statistics of old age pension and relief funds, exhibits of co-operative societies, proceedings of congresses, etc. All of this material has been digested and presented in a magnificent series of reports, each relating to a particular subject, than which, it is safe to say, there is no more valuable series of documents concerning social problems in the world.†

It was to perpetuate this work, to prevent the dispersion of these valuable documents and exhibits, and to render permanent what was until then an occasional exhibition, that the Count de Chamberlain, by his generous donation of over 1,700,000 francs created the *Musée Social*. The *Musée* was not formerly inaugurated until March 25, 1895, though organized prior to that date. The *Musée Social*, then, is a privately endowed, but public institution, whose object in the language of its constitution, is "to place gratuitously at the disposition of the public documents with collateral information, models,

* *Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris: Jury Special, Nouvel Ordre de Récompenses. Rapport par M. Alfred Le Roux.* Paris, 1867.

† *Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1889 à Paris. Rapports du Jury International publiés sous la Direction de M. Alfred Picard.*

Groupe de l'Economie Sociale. "Rapport Général" par M. Léon Say.

Section I. "*Remunération du travail*" par M. Ch. Larollée. Section II. "*Participation aux bénéfices, Associations Co-opératives de production*," par M. Charles Robert. Section III. "*Syndicats professionnels*," par M. Goffinou. Section IV. "*Apprentissage*," par M. Ch. Lucas. Section V. "*Sociétés de secours mutuels*," par M. Louis Fontaine. Section VI. "*Caisses de retraites et rentes viagères*," par M. Louis Fontaine. Section VII. "*Assurances contre, les accidents et sur la vie*," par M. L. Caubert. Section VIII. "*Caisses d'épargne*," par M. de Foville. Section IX. "*Associations Co-opératives de consommations*," par M. Raffalovich. Section X. "*Associations Co-opératives de Crédit*," par M. A. Courtois. Section XI. "*Habitations ouvrières*," par M. G. Picot. Section XII. "*Cercles d'ouvrières, Récréations et jeux*," par M. E. O. Lami. Section XIII. "*Hygiène sociale*," par M. Emile Neuman. Section XIV. "*Institutions patronales*," par M. Cheysson. Section XV. "*Grande et petite industrie, Grande et petite culture*," par M. Emile Chevallier. Section XVI. "*Intervention économique des pouvoirs publics*," par M. Léon Donnat.

constitutions, plans, etc., of institutions and organizations which have for their object and result the amelioration of the moral and material situation of the laboring classes."

To carry out these aims, the management of the *Musée* has decided upon the following lines of action: *First*, the collection of a library to contain (1) files as nearly complete as possible of all government publications relating in any way to industry and labor of every country, such as copies of laws relating to labor, reports of parliamentary or other official investigations, reports of bureaus of statistics, inspectors of mines and factories, boards of arbitration, etc.; (2) reports of labor organizations, especially the meetings of national associations, of co-operative enterprises, relief funds, etc.; (3) reports of proceedings of conventions and congresses in relation to social questions; (4) files of the publications of economic and statistical associations, and of economic and statistical periodicals and reviews, and, (5) the more important books in all languages relating to labor and social questions in their practical aspects.

Secondly, the *Musée* is more than a library. It is a laboratory in the broadest sense of the word. At its central quarters it has all of its material carefully arranged according to subject-matter. But as any system of cataloguing is not entirely satisfactory, the work of the *Musée* has been organized in sections, at the head of each of which is a specialist whose duties are to familiarize himself with not only the material in the possession of the *Musée*, but with the whole literature of his subject, in order that he can personally assist any one desiring to make use of the facilities of the *Musée*. Every facility for research is also provided in the way of private desk room, stationery, etc., as the library is devised not so much for casual consultation as for those desiring to make prolonged and detailed investigations. The officials, moreover, are always at the disposition of the public for the answering of communications asking assistance and advice concerning the mode of organization of any institution or work.

Thirdly, the *Musée* will, from time to time, as the occasion seems propitious, organize special missions in France and in foreign countries to inquire into labor subjects of present practical importance. In the autumn of 1895, two such missions were organized. The first was composed of four persons, who under the supervision of M. Paul de Rousiers, the author of "*La Question ouvrière en Angleterre*," visited England for the purpose of making an investigation and report upon trade-unions.

The second mission, at the head of which was Professor G. Blondel, had for its object the study of the agrarian question in Germany,

with especial reference to agrarian socialism and the efforts of the government to improve the condition of the agricultural classes.

These investigations are by no means mere cursory examinations in order to gain personal impressions, but represent detailed inquiries such as would be undertaken by an official bureau. Thus, for example, in the case of the latter mission, which represents an investigation of a problem of great interest at the present time in Germany, the Commission first visited the valleys of the Inn and Danube in order to study peasant associations and conditions in lower Bavaria. Westphalia and Hanover were next visited in order to observe the intimate life of the peasants in that part of Germany which more than any other has preserved the old Saxon customs, and where the fact that the conveyance of property is still influenced by ancient traditions assures to the inhabitants a situation superior to that of their neighbors. The study of small properties being completed, the Commission then visited the region of large estates situated west of the Oder. Here, the organization of the large Silesian domains and the attempts made by the Prussian Government to reconstitute, by means of the "*Relen Güter*" a middle class among the peasants of the East, were objects of especially careful investigation, a work in which the Commission was greatly aided by the assistance of the Minister of Agriculture at Berlin. Next, the Commission, thanks to the assistance of the President of the Commission for the Colonization of Interior Germany, visited and were able to study in detail the villages created by the Prussian Government in the effort to transfer to the peasants the lands formerly belonging to the Polish nobility. Throughout this investigation every effort was made to come into immediate contact with the peasants themselves, to observe upon the spot the operations of the various institutions which play so important a part in the life of the people, to study the effect of the system of insurance laws upon the agricultural population, the workings of agricultural credit associations, etc.

The activity of the *Musée* outside of France, however, has not been limited to the organization of these two missions. Following the policy of being represented at all the more important labor and social congresses and conventions, the *Musée* has been officially represented at the International Co-operative Congress of London, the Statistical Congress at Berne, the Congress of Actuaries at Brussels, the Congress of People's Banks at Bologne, the Congress in Relation to Workingmen's Houses at Bordeaux, the Trade-Union Congress at Cardiff, the Socialist Congress at Breslau and the National Congress of Corporations at Limoges.

Fourthly, the *Musée* will issue two series of publications for the purpose of making known to the public the more important results of its work. The first of these will consist of a series of volumes issued from time to time, under the title of *Bibliothèque du Musée Social* which will give the results of its missions and other material representing the results of original research. The second series will consist of more frequent bulletins or "*Circulaires*" as they will be called for the publication of material of a strictly documentary character. It will be in no sense a review for contributed articles. The chief features of its contents will be yearly bibliographical notes concerning economic publications, official or otherwise, and résumés of social legislation in each country written by its special correspondents, special bibliographical notes concerning particular subjects, notices regarding conventions, congresses, etc., and reprints of important laws, or other documents.

Finally, the *Musée* will adopt every other available method for the advancement of the study of social and economic conditions. Among these will be the holding of conferences, and the offering of money prizes for the best work on assigned subjects. Two such competitions have already been opened, one on "The Benefits of the Principles of Association for the Workingmen," and the other on "Profit Sharing," the prize in each case being \$5000 for the best work. The contest is open to all competitors, whatever the nationality or language used.

The *Musée*, then, is in its nature a central bureau of information, or a kind of international bureau of labor. It should be distinctly understood that the field of the *Musée's* activity is by no means limited to France. On the other hand, it believes that the field of its greatest usefulness will be the making known to each nation the institutions, publications, and experiences of other countries. The better to do this the *Musée* has appointed a special correspondent for each country, for in no other way could it hope to keep in touch with social movements in each or to obtain official and other publications that should be in its possession.

Concerning the usefulness of this institution the writer has already had a practical demonstration. Though the *Musée* was at that time but in the process of organization, he found the assistance of those at its head invaluable to him in the prosecution of an official investigation that he was making in the fall of 1894 for the United States Department of Labor in France and other European countries. There were placed at his disposal documents that he could not have obtained elsewhere; authorities and sources of information were indicated to him; and, above all, he was aided by

practical advice concerning the methods by which the information for which he was in search could best be obtained.

W. F. WILLOUGHBY.

*Special Correspondent of the Musée Social in America.**

THE HISTORY OF A MUNICIPAL CHARTER IN KENTUCKY.

In 1890, the Constitutional Convention after a session of eight months and considerable outside agitation submitted the results of its labors to the people who adopted the new Constitution by a large majority. At an adjourned session which lasted nearly four weeks, the Convention made some slight alterations of form. The Constitution was then formally promulgated. One of the longest articles is devoted to the regulation of municipalities. Towns and cities are divided into six classes. Cities having over one hundred thousand inhabitants are not permitted to maintain a tax-rate for purposes exceeding one dollar and fifty cents on the hundred dollars. In this the tax for schools and sinking funds is not included. In other words, a special and additional tax for educational purposes and for paying off debts existing before 1891 may be imposed. The present tax for school purposes in the city is thirty-three cents on the hundred dollars and the sinking fund tax varies from forty to eighty cents. Hence, until the bonded debt of the city has been discharged, these Constitutional limitations will be of little value. No new debt can be created or liability incurred by the city, "in any manner or for any purpose, to any amount exceeding, in any year, the income and revenue provided for such year, without the assent of two-thirds of the voters thereof voting at an election to be held for that purpose." Only one election may be held during any one year for any purpose and that must be in November. Whenever any new debt is created, a provision must be made at the same time for a tax to pay the interest and a part of the principal each year. Last year it was proposed to increase the bonded debt by one million dollars for park purposes. The proposal received a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast on that subject, but not two-thirds of all the votes cast in the same election for certain officers and now the courts must decide whether the votes cast for the bonds were sufficient.

Excepting members of the two boards constituting the General Council, nearly all important officers, including the Mayor, Police Judge, Treasurer, Tax Receiver, etc., are elected for four years.

*The address of the *Musée* is 5 rue Las-Cases, Paris, and that of the American Bureau is 1505 Twelfth street, N. W., Washington, D. C.